

Andrew Jackson to James Monroe, February 19, 1823, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

TO PRESIDENT MONROE.¹

1 N. Y. Pub. Lib., Monroe MSS.

Hermitage, February 19, 1823.

Dear Sir, I have the pleasure to acknowledge the recpt. of your letter of the 30th ult. which has Just reached me, advising of my nomination to, and confirmation by the Senate of the United States, as envoy extraordinary, and minister plenipotentiary to Mexico. I shall allways view this as an aditional proof of your friendship towards me, and as a further proof of my countries confidence in my integrity as a public officer, and as such I duly appreciate it, altho I cannot accept of the appointment conferred for several reasons. Some of which I will state. Under the present revolutionary state of Mexico, caused by the despotic acts of Iturbide whose tyranic yoke the republicans under Victoria are endeav[oring] to shake off, it appears to me that the app[ointment] of a minister from the United States at [present] would prove detrimental to the cause [of] freedom in that country, and might [aid] Tyrant Iturbide² in rivitting the chain [of] Despotism upon his country. I never can [be]come the instrument, however innocently, [of] Tyranny to oppress a people who of right ought to be free, and whose freedom is so important to the United States. was I to go there my feelings would be so different from the Emperors, that it would be impossible for our sentiments to accord, and evil instead of benefit to my country might grow out of it, and I have made it a uniform rule of my conduct never to accept a public station where it did appear to me I could render no benefit to my country. Added to this Mrs Jackson could not be prevailed upon to go to that country; to seperate again from her

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for two, or more years, when the interest of my country does not imperiously call upon me to make this sacrifice, when this trust can as well, if not better, be performed by another, all which will I hope be considered by you and my country sufficient reasons for declining it.

2 Agustin Iturbide, crowned emperor of Mexico in July, 1822, deposed in March, 1823.

Under all circumstances, it is no small gratification to me, to find from your letter that there is no obligation on me to accept, otherwise than may be altogether in accordance with my own views, and wishes, the appointment being made without consulting me. Major Eaton had advised me of your consultation with him on the subject of nominating me to the Senate, and your friendly views; My answer to him will have shewn, that I fully appreciate your friendly intention [a]ltho I could not accept the appointment, [wh]ich he will have made known to you.

I have recd a letter from Mr Poinsette³ [giv]ing his views of the present disturbed [sta]te of Mexico, which fully confirms other [ac]counts from there; and shews the propriety of the view I have taken of it, and confirms me in the idea that it might prove detrimental to the republican interest by sending out a minister under existing circumstance, and Mr Poinsetts ideas, I think, well worthy of your mature deliberation.

3 Joel R. Poinsett, M. C. from South Carolina 1821–1825, minister to Mexico 1825–1829, Secretary of War 1837–1841.

Mrs. Jackson begs through you, to present to Mrs Monroe and Mrs Hay, her affectionate regard, and believe me to be with sincere friendship and respect,

Yr most obdt. servt.⁴

4 On his refusal of the appointment to Mexico Jackson had this to say in a letter of Mar. 3, 1823, to E. G. W. Butler: "I have declined the mission to Mexico. I could be of no benefit to

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my country there, and in the present state of revolution, a minister from the United States to present credentials to the tyrant Iturbide, might strengthen him on his tottering throne, and aid him in riveting the chains of despotism upon the Mexican people. I can never do an act to aid tyranny and oppression—I have therefore declined.” (See Gayarré, *Sketch of General Jackson by Himself*, 1857.) James Gadsden confirmed the view that Jackson refused because of Poinsett's advice (*De Bow's Review*, XXIII. 94–97).